



THE BULLETIN

MAY 2ND, 2026

The Voice of CAFDA since 2004
Editor, Tom Rinaldi – tom@rinaldi1.com since 2014
When you see **, highly recommended article

CAPITAL SHORT TAKES

- It is with heavy hearts that the West Carthage Fire Department share the passing of Father Samuel Lundy, a man deeply loved throughout the fire service and our wider community. For many years, Fr. Sam served as the Chaplain of the West Carthage Fire Department and was an active member of the NYS Association of Fire Chaplains, among his many other roles throughout the fire service in Jefferson County and New York. Fr. Sam offered not only spiritual guidance, but unwavering support, compassion, and a steady presence in both our brightest and most difficult moments. His wit and wisdom will be missed.
- See information on Prevailing Wage Rates and how they apply to Fire Districts on our website at CAFDA.net.
- Ford is recalling more than 140,000 Ranger trucks in the U.S. after federal safety regulators warned a wiring issue could elevate the risk of fire, as well as potential crashes or injuries. The agency said the problem is linked to wiring associated with the sun visor and headliner that may be routed incorrectly or wrapped with too much tape, conditions that can cause the wires to degrade and potentially trigger an electrical short near the A-pillar.
- Hundreds of thousands of generators sold at retailers such as Costco, Lowe's and Home Depot are being recalled due to serious safety hazards. According to warnings from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and Costco, at least 150,000 Generac-branded portable generators sold nationwide may leak gasoline while being filled, posing fire and burn risks. Refer to the recall website for model and actions: <https://www.generac.com/about/recalls/portable-generator-fuel-leak/?id=M-00000152#top>

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:

From CAFDA

- 1. Join us at the NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday May 14th features dinner for attendees. Please join us.**
ZOOM LINK FOR THE May MEETING at 7pm:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86413237058?pwd=MauWziwckK2pyIWGVwYGUqxQLCwzHq.1>
- 2. Mark your calendars now, CAFDA Fall Seminar, Saturday November 7th, at a location in Colonie to be announced.**
- 3. CAFDA Conference '27, Lake George NY, April 9-10-11, dinner and a vendor show Friday April 10th Fort William Henry Carriage House. Sponsored Mixer the evening of April 9th at the Holiday Inn Resort, food, games, beverages.**
- 4 CAFDA Commissioner Training for 2027 will be held in Rensselaer County, Schenectady County, Saratoga County, Schoharie County and Warren County. Dates and locations to be announced.**

CAFDA TRAINING AND EVENT DATES

Day/Date	Time	Type	Location	Notes
FY 2026				
Thursday, May 14, 2026	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, June 11, 2026	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
July, 2026	NO MEETING			
Friday, August 7, 2026	1:00 PM	Membership Activity	Saratoga Race Course	NYRA Day at the Races!
Thursday, August 13, 2026	7:00 PM	Board of Directors Meeting	Clifton Park	
Thursday, September 10, 2026	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, October 8, 2026	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officers/Director Nominations
Saturday, November 7, 2026	8:00 AM	Annual Fall Workshop	Verdoy	
Thursday, November 12, 2026	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
DECEMBER 2026	NO MEETING			
FY 2027				
Saturday, January 2, 2027	9:00 AM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Organizational/Morning Meeting
Thursday, April 8 - Saturday April 10, 2027		CAFDA Conference '27	Fort William Henry Conference Center	Lake George
Thursday, April 6 - Saturday April 8, 2028		CAFDA Conference '28	Fort William Henry Conference Center	

From Other Organizations



Staying Safe on EMS Runs ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

Join our Risk Management team as we look at the most common ways firefighters get into trouble when responding to calls for medical assistance. The webinar will cover response, patient movement, medication administration, and avoiding violence.

Presenter: [Lee Price, RM Training Supervisor](#)

Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 7PM

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

<https://mcneilandcompany.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=03596f243a9d922954ebaf15e&id=9864b20bad&e=781e9a2c81>

NYSAFC is Bringing Hands-On Training to Your Area!

FIRE BEHAVIOR ON THE INSIDE

REGISTRATION: <https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/firebehavior>

FLASHOVER

REGISTRATION: <https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/flashover>

NYS AFC 2026 Seminar Series “Dangerous Spaces: Challenges and Tactics When Dealing with Garage and Basement Fires” With Chief/Commissioner Michael Lombardo (Buffalo Fire Department)

<https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/2026seminarseries>

Pre-registration is encouraged. On-site registration will be accepted if space permits.

Note: A 3% service fee will be applied if paying by credit card.

2026 Dates and Locations are available at the website for this series.

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

From Albany

There are additional Tax Credit Bills Introduced

S298 OBERACKER/A5221 TAGUE, but they are Republicans, if I were a betting man I'd say this is going nowhere.

A28 BURDICK, NO SAME AS IN THE SENATE, this one has a chance if it gets a senate sponsor, the sponsor is a Democrat.

S6019 BASKIN, A288 BARRETT, both democrats and essentially would allow first responders to take the property tax exemption and the income tax deduction.

Tax Relief for NY's First Responders

Albany had a chance to do something simple: support the volunteers who show up when everything is on the line. Volunteer firefighters and EMS don't clock out. They drop everything to respond when our community needs them. I've seen that dedication firsthand through friends who serve in those roles and through my own experience working in emergency management.

Several local assemblypersons voted NO on this measure, the vote can be seen on the assembly.state.ny.us site, see the floor votes.

When there was an opportunity to support our first responders, many chose not to. **Just remember that next time they ask you what they can do for you while they are falling all over “our brave 1st responders.”** The Yeas were 52 the Nays were 83. Can you tell I'm not happy about it!! Assembly Bill A1064 would have given 1st responders up to a \$2,500 tax credit. A small and simple way to say thank you.

Clarification: NYS EMS Vehicle Camera Requirement

Recent communications and media coverage have created confusion regarding a new NYS Department of Health (DOH) regulation related to camera systems in EMS vehicles.

First and most importantly: **this regulation does NOT apply to ambulances**. The updated DOH regulation (10 NYCRR § 800.26) applies specifically to Emergency Ambulance Service Vehicles (EASVs). These are non-transport EMS vehicles, such as:

- fly cars
- first response vehicles
- command vehicles (e.g., SUV-style units like a Tahoe)

Beginning October 22, 2026, any newly acquired EASV must be equipped with a camera system that:

- records from the driver's perspective
- activates based on certain driving events (g-force triggers)
- captures video and audio before and after activation
- retains recordings for at least 10 days

This requirement is part of broader updates to vehicle construction and safety standards, similar to requirements for backup cameras, equipment mounting, and anti-theft features.

There has been some misreporting suggesting this is a sweeping mandate. That doesn't seem to be the case.

This regulation:

- Does NOT apply to ambulances (patient transport vehicles)
- Does NOT apply to vehicles currently in service
- Does NOT require retrofitting existing vehicles
- Does NOT require immediate installation of camera systems
- Does NOT apply to vehicles ordered prior to the effective date

In short, this is a forward-looking requirement tied only to the purchase of certain new or used EMS vehicles after October 2026. Some third-party communications and media reports have incorrectly described this as a requirement for ALL EMS vehicles, including ambulances. At this time, no immediate action is required for your department. As you plan for future vehicle purchases:

- Be aware that any EASV acquired after October 22, 2026 must meet these requirements
- Work with your vendors and manufacturers to ensure compliance at the time of purchase
- No changes are needed for your current fleet

The 2026 Issues of United Concern are posted on the CAFDA.net website.

Supporting First Responders: Governor Hochul Announces Expansion of New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend

NYS has officially expanded the NYS stipend program to include additional courses. *This eligibility is backdated to the original rollout of the program (August 31, 2023)—meaning that if you took FAST in September of 2023, you are now eligible for payment on that course.* The qualifying course must have been **completed** on or after August 31, 2023.

I fully expect that this will overwhelm the limited staff in the stipend office, so encourage your membership to get their paperwork in sooner rather than later. Also, make sure that you have all of the department paperwork squared away, as this will hold them up. **If you don't know the last time your dept submitted the demographics form, just submit another one!**

Here are all the pieces (for full information, visit the NYS Website [here](#)):

DEPARTMENT/CHIEF REQUIREMENTS:

1. Fire Departments must have submitted their annual fire reports to OFPC or submit to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) in the previous calendar year
2. Fire Chiefs/Chief Officer must submit an [Annual FD Demographics Form](#) including Fire Chief or Chief Officer contact information and number of active firefighters (Submit completed forms to OFPC-Stipend@dhses.ny.gov).
3. If you run a "local fire training stipend" through your department, you have other requirements as well. This does not apply to most.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:

1. Applications must be submitted using the [OFPC Stipend Endorsement form](#). **(Submit 1 form for all courses requested for stipend - check all of the eligible courses at the bottom that you have taken since 8/31/23 but have not yet submitted for payment on).**
2. Applications must include, but are not limited to, the following components:
 - a. *signed statement from the Fire Chief/Chief Officer of the Fire Department indicating that:*
 - i. the Volunteer Firefighter is an active firefighter and Member in Good Standing (as determined by the Authority Having Jurisdiction);
 - ii. the Volunteer Firefighter was authorized by the Fire Department to take the course; and
 - iii. the Volunteer Firefighter successfully completed the course
 - b. a [Substitute W-9 form](#), if not already submitted (by the student) during course registration.
3. Application paperwork must be submitted through email to OFPC-Stipend@dhses.ny.gov.

ELIGIBLE COURSES:

First time completions of the following courses or course equivalency as determined by OFPC will be eligible for a State Fire Training stipend for course completions on or after August 31, 2023:

- 2021 BASIC EXTERIOR FIREFIGHTING OPERATIONS W/HMFRO (01-05-0101)

- 2021 SCBA/INTERIOR FIREFIGHTING OPERATIONS-FF1 (01-05-0102)
- 2021 BEFO W/HMFRO (BLENDED LEARNING) (01-05-0103)
- 2021 BEFO-SCBA/IFO-FF1 (BLENDED LEARNING) (01-05-0104)
- FIRE OFFICER I (NFPA 1021-2020 ED.) w/FSTFAC (01-11-0176)
- FIRE OFFICER I – SUPERVISING FIRE OFFICER MODULE SERIES (01-11-0154)
- BASIC WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION (01-05-0007)
- FIREFIGHTER SURVIVAL: SELF-RESCUE (01-05-0092)
- FIREFIGHTER ASSIST AND SEARCH TEAM (FAST) (01-05-0018)
 - RAPID INTERVENTION CREW (RIC) (01-05-0133)
 - FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES INSTRUCTOR 1 (01-11-0162)
 - FIRE OFFICER II (NFPA 1021-2020 EDITION) (01-11-0014)
 - FIREFIGHTER II (01-05-0020)
 - 2024 – FIREFIGHTER 2 (W/O STRUCTURAL LIVE FIRE) (01-05-0124)
 - 2024 – FIREFIGHTER 2 MODULAR SERIES W/STRUCTURAL LIVE FIRE (01-05-0131)
 - 2024 – FIREFIGHTER 2 (W/ STRUCTURAL LIVE FIRE) (01-05-0143)
 - 2024 – FIREFIGHTER 2 MODULAR SERIES W/O STRUCTURAL LIVE FIRE (01-05-0144)

THE STIPEND AMOUNT THAT WILL BE PAID TO THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER BY OFPC IS:

\$250.00 –

- BASIC WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION (01-05-0007)
- FIREFIGHTER SURVIVAL: SELF-RESCUE (01-05-0092)

\$350.00 –

- FIREFIGHTER ASSIST AND SEARCH TEAM (FAST) (01-05-0018) **or**
- RAPID INTERVENTION CREW (RIC) (01-05-0133)

\$500.00 –

- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES INSTRUCTOR 1 (01-11-0162)
- FIRE OFFICER II (NFPA 1021-2020 EDITION) (01-11-0014)
- FIREFIGHTER II (01-05-0020)
- 2024 – FIREFIGHTER 2 (W/O STRUCTURAL LIVE FIRE) (01-05-0124) **or**
- 2024 – FIREFIGHTER 2 MODULAR SERIES W/STRUCTURAL FIRE (01-05-0131) **or**
- 2024 – FIREFIGHTER 2 (W/ STRUCTURAL LIVE FIRE) (01-05-0143) **or**
- 2024 – FIREFIGHTER 2 MODULAR SERIES W/O STRUCTURAL LIVE FIRE (01-05-0144)

\$750.00 –

- 2021 BASIC EXTERIOR FIREFIGHTING OPERATIONS W/HMFRO (01-05-0101) **or**
- 2021 BEFO W/HMFRO (BLENDED LEARNING) (01-05-0103)

\$1250.00 –

- 2021 SCBA/INTERIOR FIREFIGHTING OPERATIONS-FF1 (01-05-0102)

\$1000.00 –

- FIRE OFFICER I (NFPA 1021-2020 ED.) w/FSTFAC (01-11-0176) **or**
- FIRE OFFICER I – SUPERVISING FIRE OFFICER MODULE SERIES (01-11-0154)

\$2000.00 –

- 2021 BEFO-SCBA/IFO-FF1 (BLENDED LEARNING) (01-05-0104)

This release is also available on the CAFDA web site at:

<https://cafda.net/supporting-first-responders-governor-hochul-announces-expansion-of-new-yorks-volunteer-firefighter-training-stipend/>

From Washington

Washington Watch

CFSI's Legislative Priorities

- [Emerging Technologies: Lithium-Ion Batteries, Devices, Systems, and More](#)
- [AFG and SAFER Grant Programs](#)

- [The U.S. Fire Administration](#)
- [Appropriations](#)
- [Firefighter Health and Wellness](#)
- [Fire Sprinklers](#)
- [Wildfire and the Wildland Urban Interface \(WUI\)](#)
- [Fire and Life Safety Technologies and Initiatives](#)
- [Tax and Retirement](#)
- [Emergency Medical Services](#)
- [Fire Service Infrastructure](#)
- [The Built Environment](#)

See the Congressional Fire Services Institute at: cfsi.org

Educating Members of Congress About Fire & Life Safety Issues Since 1989

From Federal DOL/OSHA

See the latest from DOL/OSHA at CAFDA.net website.

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCIAL NEWS

Local Government and School Accountability Contact Information:

Phone: (518) 474-4037; Email: localgov@osc.ny.gov

Address: Office of the State Comptroller, Division of Local Government and School Accountability
110 State Street, 12th Floor; Albany, NY 12236

NYS-OSC Fire Service Audits

No New Audits this week.

THE FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE

The Slow Drift: A Chief's Perspective on Leading Without Losing the Passion

Shannon Stone

In the fire service, passion is the starting point. We fall in love with the job on the fireground through the fast-paced calls, the challenge of a good job, and the people beside us we are serving with. But as we promote, take on added responsibility, and move further from the front lines, that connection can fade; our hunger for the first thing diminishes over time. Long-term leadership success depends on never losing that early hunger and staying rooted in the people and the mission that sparked it in the first place.

You fell in love with this job because you got your teeth kicked in at a good fire and you saw the difference you made afterwards. You cannot lose sight of that.

THE DISCONNECT: HOW CHIEFS GET DISTANT

As chiefs move up, it is easy to get buried under administrative weight. Policies, grievances, lawsuits, and constant decision making can slowly pull leaders away from their people. Over time, some chiefs lose touch not just with their crews, but with the fire service they once loved. According to this veteran chief, that drift is not inevitable. It is a leadership failure, and it is preventable.

I get how chiefs can get jaded. I do not agree with it, but I understand it. My goal is to not let that happen to me.

Smaller departments have no margin for disengaged leadership. With fewer stations and close-knit crews, chiefs shape morale, culture, and operational standards every day, whether they intend to or not. When morale slips or standards erode, it is rarely a mystery but more of a choice. *It happens when chiefs stop showing up, stop listening, and start assuming they know what is happening instead of seeing it firsthand.*

LEADERSHIP IS NOT COMPLICATED, BUT IT IS NOT EASY

Leadership is easy to describe, and it encompasses influence, guidance, support. Executing it is another matter altogether. Every firefighter brings different motivations, values, and life experience to the job. What inspires one person may frustrate another.

As rank increases, so does the weight of every word. *A casual comment from a chief can ripple across an organization, either strengthening trust or quietly eroding it.*

YOUR WORDS CARRY CONSEQUENCES

Moments of frustration, poorly chosen language, or the absence of honest feedback can undo months of positive culture building. Often the damage is unintentional, but that does not lessen its impact. *Think before you speak. If you get it wrong, those words and influence can either help or harm the organization.*

The solution is humility and engagement. Chiefs must actively invite honest feedback. Without it, leaders risk missing the effects of their own behavior until those issues become embedded in the culture. An anonymous, 360° evaluation is one way to create that feedback loop. It is not easy to read, but it can surface concerns within senior leadership before they become ingrained in the culture.

RETURNING TO THE FIREGROUND

Being on the fireground keeps me centered. It reminds me what matters and keeps me connected to the job. I still go to fires. I do not have to, I want to. I love being around the guys. It brings me back to my original purpose. It gives me the clarity to return to the office and stay focused on the things that truly serve the men and women of the organization and the public we are sworn to protect. Maintaining an operational presence keeps leadership connected to reality and reinforces trust within the ranks.

STAY ENGAGED. STAY ACCOUNTABLE.

This message is a challenge for every fire officer to fire chief.

- **Stay hungry.** Do not let promotion dull your drive.
- **Stay grounded.** Do not disappear into the office. Stay visible. Stay involved.
- **Stay humble.** *Your words matter. Use them carefully.*
- **Stay accountable.** If you have the ability to shape morale and culture, use it deliberately.

There is no excuse, especially in smaller departments, to lead from a distance. Engagement is a choice. Presence is intentional. Leadership is influence that must be earned every day. If you have the tools and the position, you get to decide how they are used.

So why do so many people get it wrong? That question is the real challenge, and one the fire service must continue to confront honestly. Watch for the drift. It happens quietly, but it can be corrected if you catch it early.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

HOT TOPIC

[Click on this PDF to see notes from DOL related to Prevailing Wage Rates for Construction, Article 8](#)

PREVAILING WAGE RATE NOTES OPEN THIS LINK:

<https://cafda.net/information-on-the-nys-dol-prevailing-wage-rates-for-fire-districts/>

FIRE DISTRICT RECORDS RETENTION

Reprint from AFDSNY Fire District Affairs

Fire districts are required to maintain and retain their records in accordance with the LGS-1 Records Retention Schedule promulgated by the State Archives. As part of the process a fire district board of fire commissioners will pass a resolution adopting the schedule as its official record retention guideline. The fire district secretary will act as the fire district's record retention officer and retain the records in accordance with the requirements of the schedule. To the extent that the treasurer has possession of financial records of the fire district the treasurer must retain those records in accordance with the requirements of the schedule. However, boards, secretaries, and treasurers are not alone in navigating the requirements of fire district records retention. The State Archives provides information and assistance at its website at

<https://www.archives.nysed.gov/> . Fire districts can speak with State Archives personnel when undertaking records related projects and can also apply for grants through the State Archives to assist with the cost of records management programs.

A model resolution for LGS-1 Schedule adoption is available on the State Archives website:

<https://www.archives.nysed.gov/records/local-government-record-schedule/model-resolution> and also on our website at Sample Forms and Policies.

The LGS-1 Schedule is also available at the State Archives website:

<https://www.archives.nysed.gov/sites/archives/files/lgs-1-2022.pdf> in a searchable PDF format. The full document also contains memoranda updating officials on any changes in records law since the schedule was updated in 2022.

A special list on fire district records has been prepared by State Archives personnel by analyzing the application of the schedule for records regularly maintained by fire districts and is available on the website: <https://www.archives.nysed.gov/sites/archives/files/lgs-1-2022-firedistricts.pdf>

POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

The Continuing Story: After 70 Years, End Near for Schuyler Heights, NY, Fire Company

I'm sure many local people are tired of this drama. After 70 years of serving the community, the end is around the corner for the Schuyler Heights Fire Company. Citing conflicts with the Schuyler Heights Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners, fire officials say they have little choice but to close the bay doors. "It is the result of sustained and escalating circumstances that have rendered the Fire Company unable to effectively operate, govern itself, or fulfill its mission to protect life and property within the community," Schuyler Heights officials wrote in a statement, according to WRGB.

The board's recent actions, including failing to approve the applications of eight volunteers, has led to a morale issue. The shutdown will be effective May 17 if approved by the court and the New York state attorney general.

New Firefighters Responding after Lexington, MN, Fire Rescue Shuttered

Kristi Miller

The city of Lexington has entered into an agreement with a neighboring fire department to provide emergency services after terminating its fire chief and determining that its own department is no longer sustainable.

Fire Chief Mike Mohler was terminated March 26, the same day the city enacted an interim management and operations agreement with the Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department (known as SBM), which took over services. Mohler, who had been with the department since 2011, became chief in 2025 after Chief Erik Edwards retired.

"The Lexington Fire Department is no longer sustainable," Lexington City Administrator Bill Petracek said. "Times have changed and Lexington needed to change direction with who provides fire protection for our community."

SBM Chief Dan Retka said after conducting a review of Lexington's operations, staffing and readiness under an administrative agreement, SBM assumed full responsibility for emergency response when the city took its department offline.

"Due to ongoing staffing challenges within the Lexington Fire Department, the city decided to take the department offline for emergency response," Retka said. "At that point, SBM assumed responsibility for providing fire and emergency services to ensure there was no disruption in coverage for the community."

Retka said residents will now be served by a 24/7 staffed response model with trained personnel and an established command structure.

He said SBM's station in Circle Pines allows for fast response times to Lexington.

"Our priority throughout this process has been to maintain a safe, consistent and professional level of service for Lexington residents," Retka said.

Lexington is still evaluating long-term options for fire protection services. SBM said it will continue providing service under the current agreement while those discussions continue.

"We want to recognize the Lexington Fire Department's long-standing service and commitment, and that of its firefighters," Retka said. "Their dedication to the community over the years has not gone unnoticed."

The Lexington Fire Department was founded in 1954.

"We remain committed to collaboration, transparency and the delivery of high-quality emergency response to the communities we serve," Retka said.

FUNDING DISAGREEMENT LEADS TO FIREHOUSE SALE...

A disagreement over funding and operations has led a fire company in Upper Darby, PA to put its fire station up for sale.

Leaders of Upper Darby Fire Company 1, the nonprofit that owns the West Chester Pike building, say the decision stems from recent changes in how the township distributes funding. According to company president Peter Rorke, the township previously provided a steady monthly stipend—about \$14,000—to help cover operating costs. *That system has now been replaced with a reimbursement model requiring detailed expense reports before payments are issued.*

Township officials say *the change is meant to improve transparency and accountability with taxpayer money.* Fire Chief Nick Martin described the process as straightforward, requiring only receipts and documentation for reimbursement. Officials also expressed frustration, saying they were not given advance notice of the company's plan to sell the building.

Rorke maintains the financial shift has strained the company's resources and contributed to the decision. He also raised concerns about reduced opportunities for volunteer firefighters, claiming full-time staffing has limited their ability to participate. Township leaders dispute that, saying space remains available but volunteer turnout has been minimal.

While the building is expected to be listed for sale soon, township officials indicated they may consider purchasing it—though they would have to compete with other buyers once it hits the open market.

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY – PROTECTING OUR OWN

FIREFIGHTER FATALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

16

In 2025 we experienced 78 LODDs reported nationally.!

FIRE SERVICE FATALITIES OR DIBILITATING INJURIES

- A volunteer Firefighter died in the Line of Duty while operating at a wildfire in northern Florida. Hilliard Firefighter James "Kevin" Crews (Hilliard is in Nassau County near Jacksonville) suffered an unspecified medical emergency while suppressing a brush fire. FF Crews treated and rushed him to a hospital, where he died. Hilliard VFD Station 4 operates cooperatively with Nassau County Fire Rescue.

FIRE APPARATUS ACCIDENTS

- An Upper Freehold, NJ fire truck knocked down a JCP&L pole and wires along Allen's Road near Olivia Drive causing moderate damage to the apparatus. No injuries were reported.
- Two firefighters were taken to the hospital Friday morning after a crash along State Highway 74 in Logan County, OK. According to the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, firefighters with the Langston Fire Department were returning to station after assisting with storm damage recovery when they were struck by a semi-truck traveling in the opposite direction. Two firefighters were taken to the hospital for treatment. The quint they were operating sustained significant damage.
- Three Henrico County, VA firefighters were hurt after a crash involving a fire engine shut down all lanes on Interstate 64 East on Wednesday, according to police. At about 12:40 p.m. on Wednesday, April 29, officers

with the Henrico County Police Division were called to I-64 east, just past the Parham Road exit for a report of a crash involving a Henrico fire engine and a dump truck. Police said an initial investigation reveals the Henrico fire engine was responding to a vehicle fire along I-64. The vehicle was reportedly stopped in the far-right lane when the dump truck hit the fire engine.

FIREFIGHTERS FALLING THROUGH

- None reported this week.

Easton PA, Firefighter Mayday and rescue

Firefighters battle a three-alarm blaze at the Hotel Hampton in Easton on Feb. 20, 2026.

Within its 30-page report, NIOSH heavily examined the incident in which Wilson firefighter Bobby Lewullis ran out of air while searching the smoke-filled building for residents needing rescue.

Lewullis became stranded on the fourth floor and radioed repeatedly for help before calling a Mayday, the report states.

It also states he removed his regulator, placed his hood over the facepiece connection to filter his breathing and hung his head out of a window while awaiting rescue before activating his personal alert safety system, or PASS — a life-safety device that automatically emits a high-decibel alarm to alert nearby firefighters when someone is incapacitated or trapped.

After more than 10 minutes without air, Lewullis climbed onto a ground ladder raised to his window, lost consciousness while descending and fell more than 20 feet to the ground, the report states.

He suffered a broken back and ankle, shoulder injuries, and smoke inhalation injuries requiring oxygen therapy and hospital treatment, according to investigators.

They said he depleted a full air supply inside the building in about 15 minutes, with his EOSTI, or end-of-service time indicator, sounding as he tried to find a way out.

He suffered a broken back and ankle, shoulder injuries, and smoke inhalation injuries requiring oxygen therapy and hospital treatment, according to investigators.

They said he depleted a full air supply inside the building in about 15 minutes, with his EOSTI, or end-of-service time indicator, sounding as he tried to find a way out.

THE LATEST ON THE CHANGING FIRE SERVICE

****Nominal Compensation and LOSAP Eligibility**

Tony Hill – Firefly

The various associations that represent the volunteer fire service in New York State are working to have legislation adopted that would allow nominal compensation to be paid to volunteer firefighters.

We thought it would be helpful to outline our thoughts regarding the current proposed legislation, and if allowing nominal compensation to volunteer firefighters here in New York would impact a volunteer's ability to participate and earn additional LOSAP benefits.

As things currently stand, New York State Article 11-A of the General Municipal Law (GML) – the statute that governs volunteer firefighter LOSAPs – *does not* reference compensation (or the lack thereof) as a contingency of participation in a LOSAP. It simply defines what it is to be an eligible volunteer firefighter.

The Internal Revenue Code (IRC) *does* mention compensation with respect to eligibility, which is why it *must* be considered when these laws are being crafted.

The proposed NYS bill addresses the eligibility issue, and it provides the proper guardrails that *would* allow volunteer firefighters to receive nominal fees *and* LOSAP at the same time. This includes being awarded points for activities for which the volunteer is also receiving a nominal fee.

Of course, the details matter – specifically the dollar amount that is considered a nominal fee and what entity would ultimately decide that answer. Based on what we know now, we are of the opinion that paying volunteers firefighter a nominal fee would not impact their ability to participate in LOSAP.

The current bill is New York State Assembly Bill A10630. It states the following:

1. Defines “pay per call” and “paid on call compensation” to be a nominal fee.

2. Defines a “volunteer firefighter” to have the same meaning as in the Volunteer Firefighters’ Benefit Law (VFBL), essentially stating that receiving this nominal fee does not make a volunteer firefighter a paid firefighter and thereby lose VFBL coverage.
3. States the nominal fees paid cannot exceed 20% of what a paid firefighter would receive for providing similar services in the location of the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).

The first two points specifically address the nominal fee language in the IRC (more on this later), making it clear that the intention and requirement of this compensation is to be a nominal fee.

The third point mirrors the ruling from the Federal Department of Labor (DOL), which stated that it would consider an individual to still be a volunteer firefighter for the purposes of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), as long as the compensation the person received did not exceed 20% of the typical compensation to a paid firefighter. This is a little more nuanced, since the purpose of the DOL ruling was for FLSA, not LOSAP eligibility. Further, the IRS could eventually issue a different interpretation of what a nominal fee would be for the purposes of being a bona fide volunteer as defined in 457(e)(11). Nevertheless, for the present time it would seem the DOL test is a reasonable one for determining if compensation paid is a nominal fee as defined in 457(e)(11).

Perhaps most importantly, the proposed Bill A10630 includes this specific language:

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS RECEIVING PAY PER CALL AND PAID ON CALL COMPENSATION (STIPENDS) SHALL BE PERMITTED TO EARN POINTS AND RECEIVE PAYMENTS UNDER A SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM ADOPTED FOR THEIR FIRE DEPARTMENT OR FIRE COMPANY UNDER ARTICLE ELEVEN-A OF THIS CHAPTER.

It seems clear that the intention is to allow an individual to receive the stipend and the points for the activity, although it would be better if the language specifically stated as much.

Even without this language, the bill is very carefully allowing an individual to continue to be considered a volunteer firefighter for the purposes of VFBL and other statutes, and the only NYS eligibility requirement for participation is to be a volunteer firefighter (read further for more details). Therefore, if an individual is considered a volunteer firefighter, such person can earn points for the activity even if a nominal fee is also paid.

About the IRC Eligibility Rules:

Most readers of this article were familiar with term Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). When it comes to compensation, the AHJ is the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and its interpretation of the IRC. It doesn’t matter what a state, local government, or an employer calls a payment – it is federally taxable unless the IRC says it is not (or that taxation on that compensation can be deferred to a later date).

Section 457(e)(11) of the IRC is why A10630 specifically includes the three points previously noted. Here is what this section of the IRC states about eligibility to participate in a LOSAP:

- Section 457(e)(11) of the IRC sets the limits on the benefits that can be provided and the qualifications of volunteers to participate in a LOSAP. A program that qualifies as a LOSAP under this section of the Code is exempt from having to comply with all the other requirements of Section 457.
- The same IRC section states that an individual eligible to participate in a LOSAP must be a “bona fide volunteer”, which is defined as someone who provides “qualified services” – firefighting and prevention services, emergency medical services, and ambulance services – and that the individual can only receive the following types of compensation:
 - Reimbursement for (or a reasonable allowance for) reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of services.
 - Reasonable benefits (including LOSAP) and nominal fees for such services, customarily paid by eligible employers in connection with the performance of such services by volunteers.

The eligibility requirements set forth in Article 11-A of the GML align with the qualified services definition in the IRC:

- GML Section 215(1): 1. “Active volunteer firefighter” means a person who has been approved by the authorities in control of a duly organized volunteer fire company or volunteer fire department as an active volunteer firefighter of such fire company or department and who is faithfully and actually performing service in the protection of life and property from fire or other emergency, accident or calamity in connection with which the services of such fire company or fire department are required.

This section of the GML does not mention anything about compensation, but it didn't need to because up to this point, volunteer firefighters could not be compensated. Therefore, the requirements for a volunteer firefighter in NY State to participate in a LOSAP met the IRC standard. Once nominal fees are introduced as a concept, it was important to address the IRC standard, which the bill has done.

Another important point to consider is that *if* the statute is amended to allow nominal compensation, then there will now be multiple ways a volunteer can be compensated – State training stipends, local training stipends, and now nominal compensation. The AHJ must consider *all* forms of compensation that could potentially be received by its volunteers to ensure, in aggregate, the amount received remains nominal in total. We covered the new training stipends in a previous blog post, which can be read here: [Training Stipend Post](#). In summary, the training stipends were properly classified as “nominal fees”, so a volunteer receiving those fees continue to meet LOSAP eligibility rules under the IRC.

Additionally, Section 216(3)(d) of the GML states:

- (d) Payments under the service award program if adopted, shall not impair any rights of the volunteer firefighters under the volunteer firefighters' benefit law or any other law.

Although this statute was mainly intended to address that being paid a LOSAP benefit does not disqualify a firefighter from VFBL coverage, it does include the tag “or any other law”. This perhaps strengthens the understanding that a volunteer could receive a stipend and LOSAP points for the same activity, though LOSAP points is not a payment.

In summary, A10630 is carefully drafted to ensure that accepting nominal compensation does not impair a volunteer their LOSAP eligibility. However, this is likely a fluid situation as this bill works its way through the process, so any reader of this blog should be aware that the information contained herein is as of the date this blog post was published. We will provide an update if the proposed statute changes, which may alter the information in this post.

PA Program Aims at Recruiting High School Students to Join Fire Departments

Kelly Urban – The Tribute-Democrat

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. – This program has a goal of recruiting new members to join local fire departments.

Fire companies serving the Ferndale Area School District came together Friday at the high school to speak to students about the need to increase membership and the importance of the job.

On hand were members from Dale Borough Fire Company, Oakland Volunteer Fire Company, Middle Taylor Township Volunteer Fire Company and the West Hills Regional Fire Department.

“If you look at statistics, the volunteer fire service is at its lowest cap of members that it's ever been,” said River Dorn, chief of Dale Borough Fire Company. “Back in 2000, there were over 100,000 volunteer firefighters in Pennsylvania, and today there's only about 38,000.

“We started this program in 2023, and that year we were able to bring in two junior volunteer firefighters, and it's a blessing to have them around.”

He said the event gave each fire company the opportunity to give a presentation and explain to students what they do as volunteer firefighters.

“We want to get students fired up and excited to join the local fire service,” Dorn said. “It's good role model and leadership skills for the students to gain some of that knowledge, as well as the amount of scholarship money that's out there for the fire service.”

He said the hope is that students will see there is something bigger than themselves.

“This is an opportunity to help their community,” Dorn said. “It doesn't matter age, race or gender. At the end of the day, we're all coming together to help our fellow community members.”

David Santa, a firefighter with the West Hills Regional Fire Department, said the need to attract young people to fire service is vital.

“The fire department is a stepping stone to other opportunities, and there's a great career path with us,” he said.

“Fire departments are in desperate need of new recruits, so we're here to inform the kids on what we have to offer. We hope they get some new insight on what the fire department does for the community and how much it's needed.”

William Brotz, principal at Ferndale Area High School, said the presentation gives students a greater appreciation for volunteer fire departments.

“All the volunteer fire companies need volunteers, and grow-your-own programs are the way to do it,” he said. “If we get our kids in these communities interested in these programs, it’s a win-win for the community and the departments.”

FIRE APPARATUS

Ground Ladders on Aerials: Why Many Departments Are Going Beyond the Minimum

Brandi Makuski

Across the country, departments differ on how they treat them. Some treat the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) minimum as the goal. Others treat it as a starting point and pack as many ladders as they can physically fit on the truck.

Manufacturers, trainers, and aerial specialists say that gap often comes down to training culture, district risk, and whether the apparatus is designed to let crews deploy ladders quickly and safely. “*Throw as many ground ladders as possible,*” says Bret Monahan, an aerial specialist with Rosenbauer and a 44-year firefighter in Whitehall, Pennsylvania. “It’s a means of egress for not only the pumper crews but the truck crews—any kind of victims.”

Sandra Vandersee, president of Duo- Safety Ladder Corp., says many departments today are more deliberate about their ladder complements than they were a decade ago, but she stresses that storage, deployment, and maintenance matter just as much as total footage.

Nathan Daily, senior requirements manager for aerials at Pierce Manufacturing, says most departments already view national standards as a baseline rather than a finish line. “*In most cases, departments treat the NFPA 1900 ground ladder minimum as a floor, not a target,*” he says.

A MINIMUM—NOT A MANDATE

Standards still shape the first conversation in many spec meetings. But, they don’t always reflect what a district actually needs. Nick Wilbur, owner of Emergency Vehicle Response and a career firefighter and instructor in Arlington, Virginia, noted that recent updates to NFPA language have softened how ladder complements are treated. “*In 2024, they moved the NFPA requirement of ground ladders to the annex,*” Wilbur says. “*So now it’s really a recommendation of a recommendation.*”

Technically, a department could build a compliant ladder truck with little or no ground ladder complement. In practice, that rarely happens. “Traditionally, ladder trucks are expected to bring ladders,” Daily says. “The vast majority of departments exceed the NFPA minimums.”

Daily says most departments he works with spec around 115 feet of ground ladders or more, often well above that, depending on their risks.

WHO REALLY DRIVES THE LADDER SPEC

Daily says ladder complements are typically shaped less by administration and more by the firefighters who use the tools. “It’s usually firefighters and spec committees, not chiefs,” he says. “Firefighters know which ladders they routinely deploy and spec accordingly.” Rather than targeting a specific number of feet, many departments focus on maximizing usable storage. *If space allows, they add more of the ladder sizes they already rely on.* That approach tends to favor 28-, 24-, and 16-foot ladders, which Daily says cover most everyday needs.

TRAINING SHARES THE MINDSET

Monahan believes ladder complements are often limited not by space or budget but by how departments train. “In a lot of places, the practice of throwing ground ladders isn’t taught,” he says. “If they’re not training on it, they’re not thinking about carrying more.” He estimates *roughly 40% of departments consistently exceed minimum complements, typically career or heavy truck companies with aggressive ladder operations.* “New York City runs that way. Chicago runs that way,” he says. “But, a lot of departments just stick with the standard.” When that happens, crews may default to the aerial device and overlook ground ladders as a primary tactic. “A lot of them say, ‘That’s what the ladder on the truck is for,’” Monahan says. “Except that ladder can’t get to every side of the building.”

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT TOTAL FEET

Several sources cautioned against thinking only in terms of footage. "I think the footage of ladders is one concept," Wilbur says. "The number and type of ladders is the other conversation." Demo trucks often carry nearly identical complements because they meet common checklists and are easier to sell. That doesn't mean they're ideal for every district. "When you see that standard complement, it's there to meet the minimum," Wilbur says. "Then everyone assumes that's what they should have."

LET THE DISTRICT DICTATE THE LADDERS

Daily says *ladder complements are heavily influenced by local conditions*: new residential construction with vaulted ceilings, older neighborhoods with narrow streets, overhead power lines, garden apartments, and areas where the aerial simply can't position.

Wilbur encourages departments to physically walk their districts before making decisions. "You go to the front of a building and see two stories," he says. "You go around the back and it's three or four. Most people don't look at side Charlie until there's a fire."

Monahan says his own district's garden apartments with no rear access forced them to prioritize multiple 35-foot ladders. "That's the only way we're getting people out back there," he says.

STORAGE AND DEPLOYMENT MATTER AS MUCH AS QUANTITY

Even when departments want more ladders, space becomes the limiting factor. Daily says most aerials rely on fixed rear torque boxes or ladder tunnels, and that footprint ultimately dictates what fits. Tillers may offer more flexibility by narrowing compartments to gain ladder storage, but that usually means sacrificing other equipment space.

Side-stack mounting along the side of the body can make ladders easier and safer to deploy at chest height but again costs compartment capacity.

Vandersee says smooth slide systems and proven hardware designs help ensure ladders come off the truck quickly and safely. Monahan adds that orientation makes a difference. "When they're vertical, and you can shoulder them, it's easier," he says. *"Flat storage is harder." If ladders are difficult to remove, crews are less likely to use them.*

WEIGHT AND FIREFIGHTER ENERGY

Weight can matter as much as reach. Wilbur frames ladder selection as an energy issue. "We only have a certain amount of energy," he says. "If you burn it all throwing one big ladder, you're done for the next task." A 16-foot ladder can often be thrown by one firefighter. A heavy two-section 35 may require two.

Daily says ladder weight rarely creates vehicle compliance issues, but it strongly influences ergonomics. "Firefighters strongly prefer lighter ladders because they're easier and safer to deploy," he says.

WHAT GETS USED AND WHAT DOESN'T

When it comes to day-to-day use, smaller ladders tend to see the most action. *Monahan says 16- and 24-foot ladders handle the bulk of residential fires.* "The bread and butter," he calls them. Daily says some specialty ladders are often carried more out of tradition than necessity, while others are underrecognized despite their usefulness.

Deborah Kelley of Sam Carbis Solutions says many departments default to heavier-duty extension ladders that rarely leave the rack. *"The ladder most departments think they need but rarely use is usually the heavy duty 35-foot and longer models,"* Kelley says. "They're extremely heavy and bulky. A two-section 35 is considerably lighter, reaches the same height, and carries a smaller storage footprint." Those longer ladders still have value in districts with consistent three-story or taller occupancies, she says, but they can be overkill for everyday responses.

At the same time, Kelley says smaller or more versatile tools can add capability without major rig changes. Lightweight ladders designed for quick ground-floor access allow crews to reach windows faster. *Double-hook roof ladders that can be deployed from either end reduce repositioning at the peak and speed roof operations.* "Firefighters consistently highlight the time savings," she said. "They can climb, pull the ladder over, and set the hooks without having to rotate it."

Combination ladders that convert between extension and A-frame configurations also give crews flexibility for interior or confined spaces while occupying minimal storage space. Kelley says many departments view them as a more durable, fireground-ready alternative to consumer-grade multipurpose ladders.

She adds that many apparatuses still carry a basic standard set—typically a 24-foot extension ladder, a 14-foot roof ladder, and a 10-foot folding ladder—then build outward based on local hazards.

MAINTENANCE AND LONGEVITY

Ground ladders are generally durable, but upkeep matters. Daily says cleanliness plays a big role, especially for externally mounted aluminum ladders exposed to weather and road contaminants. Departments that regularly clean and inspect ladders extend the life of slide systems and hardware. Vandersee recommends inspecting ladders after each use and tracking wear closely.

Wilbur emphasizes annual testing. “We’ve had brand-new ladders fail before being placed in service,” he says.

THE MISSION, NOT THE BROCHURE

Asked what advice they would give departments spec’ing an aerial today, all five sources returned to the same theme: Start with how you actually operate. Daily says to understand the minimums, then talk to the firefighters who deploy the ladders. “Don’t just copy the previous truck,” he says. “Customize it to your response.”

Wilbur says to drive the district, walk the buildings, and look at the back sides.

Monahan keeps it simple: “Buy more ladders and throw them.”

Because when the fire is on the wrong side of the building—or the aerial can’t reach—the ladders that matter most are the ones crews can grab quickly and put to work.

THE BUILDING AND FIRE CODE ISSUES – WEEKLY REPORT ON FIRE FATALITIES

The New ICC Code-NYS Edition went into effect on December 31st 2025 although the implementation of the energy code provisions have been withdrawn until further notice.

Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	21
Last fire death 4/29/26, Troy, Rensselaer Co. Male, 67	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	51
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	423
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/ 37
	#2 OH 28
	#3 NY 21
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2026: 695	
Both the states of Maryland and California as well as Wash. DC require sprinklers in 1&2 family dwellings.	
According to realtors and builders only old homes burn, so sprinklers are not needed in new homes: so my question to you is; when does a new home become an old home?	

GREEN ENERGY AND THE IMPACT ON THE FIRE SERVICE

Electric Bike Started Fire in Central NY Apartment Complex

Finn Lincoln – syracuse.com

An electric bike battery started a fire at one of the largest apartment complexes in Utica, according to the city’s fire department. The call for firefighters first came in around 3:15 p.m. Saturday from the Kennedy Plaza apartments at 2 Kennedy Plaza, according to a Utica Fire Department Facebook post. Callers first reported a fire alarm was going off on the 12th floor.

Callers informed the 911 center that more alarms had started to go off and the sprinkler system had been triggered as firefighters started to arrive on the scene, the post said. Callers reported that smoke and fire were coming from an electric bike in an apartment on the 12th floor.

Firefighters worked to clear the scene of any tenants, and the call was upgraded to a working structure fire, the post said.

[*A working sprinkler system in the building helped suppress the fire*](#), according to a Facebook post.

Syracuse.com | The Post-Standard has reached out to the property owners and the Utica police and fire departments for additional details on the fire. It is unclear at this time whether any tenants have been displaced or injured.

Investigators later confirmed that the fire came from the lithium-ion battery of an electric bike in the apartment, according to the post.

The department cautioned the public against bringing electric bikes into apartments, saying the practice could increase the risk of fire.

[Battery Fire in CA Garage Sends One Person to the Hospital](#)

Stephanie Zappelli – The Tribune

A San Luis Obispo garage fire sent a resident to the hospital on Friday morning.

The fire was reported at 9:57 a.m. on Luneta Drive between Verde Street and South Tassajara Street, the emergency response application PulsePoint said.

When firefighters arrived on the scene, they found a single-story detached garage with a moderate amount of smoke and fire coming out of the side, according to discussion on emergency radio. One person was sent to the hospital in an ambulance, San Luis Obispo Fire Department emergency manager Joe Little told The Tribune. Little did not know the extent of the person's injuries, he said.

[*The fire was related to lithium ion batteries being stored in the garage*](#), he said.

A regional hazmat team was heading to the scene of the fire to assess the condition of the batteries and decide how to dispose of them. The fire was extinguished by 10:45 a.m., but firefighters will remain on scene for a few hours for mop up.

[E-Bike Blast Causes MI Fire Despite 'Explosion-Proof Bag'](#)

Justine Lofton – mlive.com

An electric bicycle exploded Saturday morning on Mackinac Island, causing a building to catch fire, officials said.

The Mackinac Island Fire Department was notified at 7:37 a.m. Saturday of smoke and flames inside a building on Cadotte near Second Street, Chief Jason St. Onge said in a news release.

A unit arrived on the scene within minutes and stretched an attack line to the rear of the building. Two firefighters went inside, extinguished the fire and threw the burning e-bike out a window.

[*"The battery was inside an 'explosion proof bag' and blew the bag apart," St. Onge said. "The 'explosion proof bag' did nothing to stop the fire."*](#)

In addition, the battery was charging at the time of the fire, he said. The building was disconnected from electricity due to previous flooding; the e-bike may have been in the flooded basement prior to the explosion.

"I am not the boy who cried wolf when the wolf keeps coming back," St. Onge said. "Keep these things out of your building. [*This is the 10th known e-bike fire on Mackinac Island.*](#)"

NEIGHBOR'S HELPING NEIGHBORS, thank you for your support!!

[Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast](#)

Sunday May 17 Breakfast will be served starting at 8AM

[Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast](#)

Next Breakfast will be held in October at a date to be announced.

[Speigletown Fire Department Breakfast 2nd Sunday of each month](#)

Sunday May 10th from 7:30 to 11:30, \$10 adults, \$5 children, under 5 free: Last Breakfast until October 11th.

Cancer Benefit Firefighter's Ball

The Saratoga County Fire Officer's Association is sponsoring a benefit to create a cancer fund to assist firefighters in Saratoga County. The Ball will be held on May 9th location TBA, to include finger foods, music and a cash bar all for a donation of \$30 per person. **Sponsors are needed.**

GENERAL INTEREST TO ALL

I had to share this article from our own, Paul Parker of the Round Lake Hose Co., who has been a trailblazer in the fire service. Paul defines a leader and a mentor, well said my friend, thank you. Good advice for those of us who are aging out of our fire service commitments.

****Firefighters, Officers & Chiefs: What Is Your End Game?**

Knowing how mentally and emotionally debilitating that retirement from the fire service can be for a member, Paul Parker Jr. embraced the new chapter of his life as an opportunity for growth and exploration.

Paul Parker Jr.

KEY TAKEWAYS

- Firefighters, officers and chiefs must not overlook the gap that they likely will experience in their life when they no longer dedicate the time and effort to the fire service that was part of their daily routine for years.
- By engaging in meaningful activities, maintaining social connections and focusing on one's well-being, fire service members who retire can create purpose.
- Having a clear vision for one's post-fire service life is just as essential as preparing for an emergency call.

Fortunately for the author, a fellow fire chief who retired not too long ago, encouraged him to look at retirement as a significant life transition that can be both exciting and challenging and that it's vital to have a clear vision for post-fire service life.

Volunteer or career, we will all reach a time in our life when we no longer can do the job that many have dedicated 20, 30 or 40-plus years to. Then what?

SIGHTS SET ON A GOAL

My story begins in a small village in upstate New York, where I continue to serve with the local volunteer fire department, which is where my father and his father before him also served.

One morning in 1970, my mother, who was a stay-at-home parent, was doing her daily housework when she noticed a young boy walking down the street all alone. She was appalled that someone would let their little boy walk the village streets alone, until she quickly realized that it was her very own three-year-old son. She yelled from our second-floor porch, asking what I thought I was doing. My reply, almost the same as it is today: "Going to the firehouse."

Fast forward to when I was 16, obtaining my driver's license, dating a beautiful girl, serving as a member of the high school lacrosse team and serving as an active member of the small village fire department. Life was good.

As high school graduation approached, I thought, "Now what?" Up until that point, I had a purpose to get out of bed every day, but what was to come next? All I ever wanted to do was go to the firehouse and to be a good firefighter who was accepted by my peers.

Thankfully, the local community college offered a fire protection degree program. It appealed to me very much. It offered an opportunity to advance in this career. I enrolled.

After getting married and having kids, I finally completed all of the necessary course work and received my degree. Again, now what?

At the age of 22, I was informed that the local military base would be hiring civilian firefighters as it transitioned from an on-call-type department to a fully staffed career department. I applied. After passing the necessary background and medical checks, I was hired.

Graduating from the fire academy, I reached my lifetime goal of becoming a full-time career firefighter and able to regularly go to the firehouse.

I also was fortunate to be able to continue to volunteer with my volunteer fire department, which was located only a county away. Life still was good.

LIFE CHANGED

In 2000, I became the fire chief of my volunteer fire department. I served six consecutive terms. In 2010, I was promoted to captain at my career fire department. In 2012, I was promoted to assistant fire chief. During this time, I also spent 9 years as a military firefighter, 20 years as a New York State fire instructor and 10 years as a county deputy fire coordinator. Responding to calls, putting out fires and assisting people in need were all a part of this firefighter's life. It filled my soul with an unimaginable joy for me and my team of firefighters to be able to help someone on their darkest day. Life certainly was good!

Fast forward to 2025: I retired from my career department and found myself in a limited role with my volunteer department. No longer am I charging for the nozzle, making every run or finding myself smack dab in the brunt of the firefighting. I now drive and operate an apparatus and help with outside activities (e.g., stretching hose and throwing ladders). However, how long will I have the strength and energy to get out of a warm bed at 4 a.m. for a carbon monoxide call or get out of the recliner at 11 p.m. for an automatic fire alarm?

After 40 years of being an integral part of the team, including inspiring the young and teaching them how, in fact, to become an old firefighter, life has changed, and it's different. I do hope that my legacy incorporates not what I accomplished over the course of my career but rather how I left the agencies better than what they were.

FILLING THE GAP

A colleague and fellow retired chief officer told me on several occasions before my retirement that I needed an end game, something to fill the gap of the time, effort and dedication that I gave to the fire service for more than 40 years. What will my end game look like, I thought?

The Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance reported 112 suicides in 2024, with approximately 20 percent of those being retired firefighters and EMTs. (Back in the day, while I attended the fire academy, we experienced a harrowing event: One of our classmates attempted to commit suicide. In the same time frame, in my own volunteer fire department, two other members also attempted suicide.) Not wanting to be part of these statistics, I worked to find my end game. Thankfully, I found it.

My days now include a daily exercise routine at the local gym and working a couple of part-time jobs. With the addition of my first grandchild, I've reached my end game. Life is definitely good!

NEW CHAPTER

Retirement is a significant life transition that can be both exciting and challenging. *By engaging in meaningful activities, maintaining social connections and focusing on your well-being, you can create a fulfilling and purposeful retirement.* Uncertainty or feeling a bit lost is a normal part of the path to fulfillment in retirement. Embrace this new chapter as an opportunity for growth and exploration. Take the time to reconnect with your loved ones; remember, they've built a life, too, and this adjustment will be just as big for them as it is for you. Having an end game—a clear vision for your post-fire service life—is just as essential as preparing for any emergency call. It shouldn't just mark an ending; it should celebrate a life of commitment while opening a new chapter of growth and fulfillment.

If you haven't thought of it yet, what will your end game be? I encourage you to start to figure that out today.

TAKE A MOMENT TO SMILE

A woman went into a busy cake shop and when it was her turn to be served she commented, "You know, I came into this shop 15 years ago when I was just a girl." The harassed shop assistant, snapped "I'm sorry about that but I'm serving as fast as I can."

Boght Community Fire District, Station Keeper/Maintenance Person

The Boght Community Fire District has a full-time hourly position available for a professional and highly motivated person to perform custodial services and to maintain fire district buildings, grounds and equipment. Must have good communication skills, the ability to manage several projects simultaneously, and be flexible with work hours when necessary. Prior experience preferred. All candidates must have a current active status as a volunteer firefighter.

Full time hours at 40 hours per week, starting at \$20/hour, commensurate with experience. Benefits available to include health, dental, and life insurance. Vacation, personal, sick time, paid holidays, and NYS Retirement.

Please submit application and resume with cover letter to District Secretary Alicia Hodges at office@boghtfire.org , by fax at (518)785-0311 or by mail to Boght Community Fire District, 8 Preston Drive, Cohoes, NY 12047.

Qualifications/Requirements:

- 21 years of age or older
- Minimum High School diploma or equivalent
- Relevant work or experience
- Basic knowledge and abilities to perform general maintenance, including but not limited to light carpentry, light plumbing, light electrical, painting, the ability to maintain and use hand and power tools, cleaning and yard work, in addition to be able to maintain and repair small gas engines
- Basic computer skills
- Able to lift objects weighing 70 lbs. or greater
- Pass District Physical, drug screen, and background check
- Willing to respond for emergencies and snow removal
- Must possess and maintain a valid NYS Driver's license, with a good driving record
- CPR/AED trained

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Performs work under the direction of the District Administrative Supervisor and Commissioner in charge of Personnel.
- Maintain Fire District buildings, grounds and equipment.
 - o Mowing, landscaping, trimming of bushes and trees
 - o Removal of snow and ice. Snow and ice removal to be done off hours during snow storms. Salting as needed.
 - o Minor carpentry, plumbing, electrical, painting, general repairs/maintenance
 - o Maintaining and repairing equipment
 - o Custodial type services including but not limited to: mopping, vacuuming, washing, scrubbing, cleaning windows, buffing, carpet cleaning, garbage removal.
 - o Assist with set up and break down for District, Fire Company, and Auxiliary meetings or as requested.
- Fire Apparatus and Equipment
 - o Clean, fuel, maintain, perform daily truck/equipment checks, and transport apparatus and equipment as necessary
 - o Perform minor apparatus/equipment repairs
 - o Assist in coordination of various equipment testing i.e., hose, ladder, pump.
 - o Maintain EMS stock with current expiration dates
 - o Upon request, participate in community outreach events, i.e., Fire Prevention
 - o Any additional tasks as requested by Chief Officers.
- Within one (1) year of hire date, must be a qualified driver on all District vehicles. Training will be provided on District time.
- Any and all other duties as assigned by the District Administrative Supervisor and/or Board of Commissioners

WHO ARE YOUR CAFDA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2026?

OFFICERS

President, Tom Rinaldi, Commissioner, Stillwater Fire District
1st Vice President, Ellen Martin, Deputy Treasurer Clifton Park Fire District

DIRECTORS:

Les Bonesteel Past Commissioner, Burnt Hills/Saratoga,
Skip Smith, Commissioner, West Crescent/Saratoga
Joyce Petkus Treasurer Greenfield/Saratoga,
Ed Woehrle Commissioner Niskayuna #1/Schenectady
Art Hunsinger, Ex-Officio Member Clifton Park Fire District.

We would consider expanding the number of Directors if individuals from other counties would volunteer to participate!!

APPOINTEES

Secretary Molly Jenkins, Region 1 Director, Assoc of Fire Districts, NYS
Treasurer: Tony Hill
Sargent at Arms: Tom Wood, Commissioner, Northumberland Fire District
Chaplain: Dane Fagan
Legal Counsel: Greg Serio, Safety Officer, Verdoy Fire District

**The Capital Area Association represents any fire district that wishes to join CAFDA. Fire District Officials include Commissioners, Treasurers, and Deputy Treasurers. Secretaries and Chiefs are also invited to join!
If your Fire District is a member, you are a member!!**

**Please advise your secretaries that all correspondence should be mailed to:
All correspondence & Capital Area Fire Districts Association Mailing Address should be directed to:
CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063 or EMAIL: SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET
Financial issues should be addressed to: TREASURER@CAFDA.NET
518-407-5020**

[Wish to become a member of CAFDA, go to CAFDA.net/membership to apply.](http://CAFDA.net/membership)

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.CAFDA.NET

Stay tuned for some new Business Partners for 2026.

Welcome back Stawnychy financial services, serving fire districts in New York State.

We invite our business partners to submit educational information to be included in this Bulletin for district commissioners and chief officers

We want to thank all of our Business Partners for renewing their partnership for 2026. You are invited to our monthly membership meeting and to any of our social events..

FIRE SERVICE LEGAL SERVICES



The D'Amato Law Group LLP
Gregory Serio, Partner
Alyssa B. Snyder, Partner
111 Washington Ave Suite 600
Albany, NY 12210
518.426.3800
Email: gserio@dlgny.com or
asnyder@dlgny.com
damatolawgroup.com



Monaco Cooper Lamme & Carr.PLLC
1881 Western Ave, Suite 200 Albany, NY 12203
[Nicole Strippoli 518-941-9040](tel:518-941-9040)
NSTRIPPOLI@MCLCLAW.COM
<https://mclclaw.com>

Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLP
Bond Counsel

Robert J. McLaughlin, Partner
One Commerce Plaza, Albany, NY 12260
518-487-7697 Cell 518-813-6333
mclaughlin@woh.com
www.woh.com

Ducharme, Clark & Sovern, LLP

Jack Clark, Fire District Attorney
646 Plank Rd. Clifton Park, NY 12065
518-373-1482
Ducharmeclark.com

FIRE STATION & FACILITIES ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS

C.T. Male Associates

Engineering, Surveying, Architecture, Landscape Architecture & Geology, D.P.C.

Single Source Responsibility
for all your
Essential Facility Design Services

www.ctmale.com
50 Century Hill Drive, Latham, NY 12110 518.786.7400

n.lobosco@ctmale.com



Powered by partnership.

Architecture/Engineering/Code Services

Melissa Smith – mlsmith@labellapc.com
Senior Marketing Manager
518-903-8394
4 British American Blvd
Latham, NY 12110

Managed IT Services
Cloud Telephone Services



Northeast IS
YOUR BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY PARTNER

Ryan Sapienza
Project Manager/Technology Consultant
518-754-4623
Service 518-869-3614
930 Albany Shaker Rd, Latham, NY 12110



Home of the Award Winning



Five Bugles
Design



Mitchell Associates
Architects

Wendel, Centerpointe Corporate Park, 375 Essjay
Road, Suite 200, Williamsville, NY 14221

716.688.0766

Amy Numrich, MBA

Digital Marketing & Events Specialist
anumrich@wendelcompanies.com



Architects & Engineers
433 River Street, Suite 8002

Troy, NY 12180

518-765-5105

Dennis Ross, Practice Leader

www.H2M.com

FIRE SERVICE INSURANCE



AMSURE.
Above and Beyond

Specializing in insurance for fire districts and departments

Dave Meager

Dustin Hall

dmeager@amsureins.com dhall@amsureins.com

31 Woodlawn Avenue, Saratoga Springs
(518) 584-5300 • Amsureins.com

Aurora Inc. Insurance

120 Broadway
Albany, NY 12204
518-449-3180

aurorainsurance.com
Michael May, Broker

mmay@aurorainsurance.com



Tony Blackwell, Territory Sales Manager
800-822-3747 ext 530
ablackwell@mcneilandcompany.com

Haughey Insurance Agency

850 State Route 50
Burnt Hills, NY 12027
518-399-1583
www.haugheyagency.com



Stephan Petras
Marketing Representative
One Blue Hill Plaza – 16th Floor
PO Box 1609
Pearl River, NY 10965
845-352-8855x7099
329-236-3505
spetras@fdmny.com
VFBL/Workers' Comp



Pat Daglio
pdaglio@vfis.com
717.819.3072



FLEURY
RISK MANAGEMENT
Flcury Risk Management
28 Corporate Drive, Suite 104
Clifton Park, NY 12065
518.478.6314

<https://www.flcuryrisk.com/nysgroup497>
VFBL Insurances Services



8 British American Blvd., Latham, NY 12110
518.272.6120
full-service **insurance** brokerage for business,
benefits, and personal coverage



Dignum & Bame Insurance
98B Troy Road
East Greenbush, NY 12061
518.479.2004
Katherine Henry
Kate.henry@nfp.com

FIRE SERVICE FINANCIAL SERVICES AND LOSAP MANAGEMENT



Service Award Programs (LOSAP)

Anthony Hill ahill@fireflyadmin.com
President (518) 687-1400 (office)
www.fireflyadmin.com (518) 937-6174 (cell)



UBS Financial Advisors

Ralph Lemme, CFP
Ralph.lemme@ubs.com
8 Southwoods Blvd Suite 207
Albany, NY 12211
518.445.1667



Wealth Management

The LOSAP Group
518-432-5087
838-433-7304 cell
www.thelosapgroup.com.
nikki.haskins@rbc.com
455 Patroon Creek Blvd, suite 200, Albany NY
12206

FULL-SERVICE FIRE EQUIPMENT



Jeremy Hartnett
824 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, DE 19809
302-483-7699
jeremy@firehousepayroll.com
payroll-pension reporting-tax filing
direct deposits-timekeeping-HR Services



Nicole Meeker
Manager of Business Development & Accts
518-394-7894
Cell 607-423-4811
www.penflexinc.com
nmeeker@penflexinc.com



www.jeromefire.com
Breathing Air Comp Maintenance,
Air Quality Tests and Repairs
Russell Jerome
315-699-4533 Office
Ready Rack Extractor/Washers
Full Line of Fire Equipment
8721 Caughdenoy Rd, Clay, NY 13041

DRYER VENT CLEANING



DRYER VENT WIZARD

JORDAN CATINO
8 NAPA COURT, SCHENECTADY, NY 12309
518-344-0664
SARATOGADRYERVENT.COM
jcatino@dryerventwizard.com

FIRE DEPT COMPUTER MANAGEMENT & REPAIR



White Wolf Computer, LLC
4 Normanskill Blvd. Suite 410,
Delmar, NY 12054
[\(518\) 459-9653](tel:5184599653)

Managed Services
Cloud Hosting Solutions
Telephone Data Cabling
Backup Disaster Recovery
Web Design Services

FIRE COMPANY FUND RAISING



Lloyd Fox, Account Executive
34 Garner Road, Averill Park, NY 12018
Lfox8@nycap.rr.com
518-810-7819
www.funddrive.com

FIRE APPARATUS/SERVICE

VANDER MOLEN FIRE APPARATUS SALES & SERVICE

Mike Bonesteel
Warranty & Safety Manager
518-288-3587 X101
Cell 518-926-0451
After Hours 680-800-5015
1 Super 50 Way, Ballston Lake, NY 12019

PROPERTY RESTORATION



PROPERTY RESTORATION

2191 Central Ave, Schenectady, NY 12304
518-320-8333
Hotline 877.214.3930
GM: Mike Kwart
Professional 24/7 Residential and Commercial
Restoration Services
Belfor.com/us/en/belfor-albany

FIRE EQUIPMENT TESTING



Safety First Equipment Testing

99 Glass Lake Road
Averill Park, NY 12018
518-892-5860

www.safetyfirstfirehose.com
HOSE, APPLIANCE & LADDER TESTING
Safety1hose@gmail.com

PRINTING AND MAIL SERVICES



518.371.4649
12 FIRE ROAD, CLIFTON PARK, NY 12065
printproduction@aol.com
one stop print shop and full service mailing house
No project large or small, we can't handle

FIRE SERVICE EQUIPMENT



Timmy Kimball
518-925-2786

www.divalsafety.com
Testing-Safety-Promotional Services-Respiratory Solutions
Facility Safety-Fall Protection-Training
60 Cohoes Ave, Green Island NY 12183

FIRE DISTRICT CPA/AUDITS/FINANCIAL SERVICES



Accounting, Consulting & IT Security
1581 Franklin Ave. Mineola, NY 11501
Kyle Brengel, Managing Partner
516-472-7345
kbregel@gblny.com



Zoriana M. Stawnychy
973.283.0024
zoriana@stawnychyfinancial.com
135 Kinnelon Road Suite 101
Kinnelon, NJ 07405
Serving fire districts in New York State



Aaron Hahn
1 Pine West Plaza Suite 107, Albany NY
12205
518.452.8055x17 or 518-452-9055
Email: ahahn@bgcpa.net



518-459-6700
10 British-American Blvd, Latham, NY 12110
www.bstco.com
Brendan Kennedy ext 356



BUSINESS
ADVISORS
AND CPAS

11 British American Blvd, Latham, NY 12110
518-785-0134
Queensbury Office 518-792-6595
<http://www.mmbaccounting.com>
Alan W. Clink, CPA aclink@mmb-co.com
Heather R. Lewis, CPA hlewis@mmb-co.com

BANKING/FIRE SERVICE FUNDING SOURCES



JOHN M. LESNIEWSKI
Assistant Vice President and
Senior Business Banking Officer
Fulton/Montgomery Markets
12 Fremont Street, Gloversville, NY 12078
P: 518.775-5205 | M: 518.848-0612
NMLS ID 915694
www.nbtbank.com



David Farstad, VP-Municipal Banking
652 Albany-Shaker Road, Albany NY
12211
Ph: 518-730-3120
Cell: 518-506-0075
farstadd@pioneerbanking.com



425 Main Street Catskill, NY 12414
www.tbogc.com
518.943.2600 X2198
Joe Rothrock – josephr@tbogc.com
Specializing in Fire Service & EMS Financing



The Arrow Family of Companies
Corporate HQ 250 Glen Street
Glens Falls, NY 12801
518-793-4121
Business Banking Services
Arrowbank.com
Hero Mortgage Program Supporting
First Responders Available

The Weekly Capital Bulletin is reaching well over 700+ subscribed fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis. This is a service of CAFDA through the effort of Tom Rinaldi who can be reached at tom@rinaldi1.com for comments and content contributions are always welcome.